

### How are we to understand the Olger Dyke?

Comparing the Olger Dyke to the Roman border “Limes” along the rivers Danube and Rhine shows that the Olger Dyke was oriented towards the north. It was erected by the Angles. Along with the river Vidå and the two ring fortresses Archsumburg and Trælbanke, the Olger Dyke was an efficient protection of the mainland of the Angles and reached across Jutland from the Baltic Sea to the North Sea.

It is highly unlikely that a complex and large-scale structure like the Olger Dyke was planned and organised by the local chief. For the first time we see concrete evidence of early state formation in southern Scandinavia.

Characteristics of early state formation are:

- Centralised access to weapons
- Professional army for protection of the population
- Large, communal defensive structures like the Olger Dyke and the ring fortresses are erected and maintained
- Construction of buildings of monumental scale
- Centralised religious practices as it is expressed through large, public offerings in certain bogs (Thorsberg, Nydam, and Ejsbøl)
- Continued use of settlement and cemetery sites through many generations
- Monopolised access to luxury goods from the Roman Empire; such objects are almost exclusively found in the very richest graves

The construction of the Olger Dyke reflects a significant change in the development of prehistoric societies. Around the birth of Christ and onwards, structures of power in southern Scandinavia change radically. We first identify this development among the Angles. This cultural change has had an impact on the general historical development. Even today, physical barriers are used as a way of separating groups of people.

Captions:

*The Olger Dyke is being maintained and extended. Drawing: Jørgen Andersen, MSJ.*

*A professional army for collective protection. Drawing: Jørgen Andersen, MSJ.*

*The Berlin Wall was erected in 1961 by the DDR (East Germany). It separated Berlin into an eastern and a western part. The intention of the wall was to prevent East and West Germans, who lived under different political systems, from travelling freely between the two countries. The wall lost its significance at the reunification of Germany in 1989. Foto: IMAGO, IMAGO / United Archives.*

*North and South Korea were at war between 1951 and 1953. In 1953 they agreed on a truce. Due to a UN intervention a 3 km wide demilitarised zone was defined in order to prevent another war. A formal peace treaty between the two countries was never entered. The demilitarised zone still works as a peace keeping measure. Photo: Ahn Young-joon/Ritzau Scanpix*

*The United States of America started the construction of the Trump wall on the border to Mexico in 2019. Like the Roman “Limes” was supposed to prevent German attacks on the Roman provinces, this wall was*

*erected to prevent illegal immigration from South and Central America via Mexico to the USA. Foto: Shutterstock*

